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Press Release

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Navy's Air Boss Announces Improvements to Blues' Selection Process

SAN DIEGO — The Commander of Naval Air Forces announced today several policy and procedural changes designed to strengthen the selection process for future Blue Angel teams.

The process improvements are being made and codified in both governing instructions and practice for the future.

"I am committed to upholding the highest standards of professionalism while preserving the tradition of excellence that is the hallmark of the Blue Angels," said Vice Adm. David Buss, commander, Naval Air Forces. "My focus is on ensuring that the Blue Angels team, our Navy and Marine Corps' elite Flight Demonstration Squadron, is made up of the most qualified and professional aviators."

One of the organizational changes that Vice Adm. Buss has directed is the establishment of an executive officer (XO) billet for the Blue Angels. As part of the leadership command triad in Navy operational squadrons, the XO is second-in-command, a near peer for solid backup to the commanding officer. The XO ensures that Navy policies are carried out properly and day-to-day business is executed smartly. The XO will be a naval aviator but will not be a flying member of the demonstration team. A new XO will be named with the announcement of the 2015 Blue Angels Team.

"The 'Command Triad' is the leadership core of any Navy ship or squadron, consisting of the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief, who support, reinforce, and challenge, when appropriate, each other in all aspects of leading a unit. The Blue Angels have never had

a complete 'Triad' as they've never had a dedicated XO; we are seizing this opportunity to fix that," said Rear Adm. Roy J. Kelley, commander, Naval Aviation and Training.

Additionally, changes to the application and selection process have been implemented to assure the team continues to be made up of the best Naval Aviation has to offer. Specifically, additional oversight has been included so that Navy Personnel Command will review finalists and the Chief of Naval Aviation Training will have final approval authority of the team. The new selection process changes are being used during the selection of the 2015 team.

"Every individual selected to join the Blue Angels is chosen based on their individual merits," said Cmdr. Tom Frosch, commanding officer of the Blue Angels. "I couldn't be more proud of the great talent and professionalism of the current team, and we remain committed to selecting the most talented and qualified individuals for future Blue Angel Teams. As we continue to incorporate changes, we will carry on the Blue Angels tradition of excellence."

The 2015 Blue Angel Team announcement is expected later this week and will represent the talented range of both Navy and Marine Corps officers who applied this year.

"I am fully confident in the current Blue Angels team and that future teams will continue the proud tradition of excellence, discipline, and teamwork, as they represent our Navy and Marine Corps around the nation and around the globe," said Vice Adm. Buss.